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The end of archival ideas?

Craig Gauld

The central structure of this chapter is indebted to Robert Rowland-Smith, consultant, writer and lecturer on philosophy, literature and psychoanalysis. In 2015, he argued that we are coming to the end of the Age of Ideas. In doing so, he examined how different 'ages' – of superstition, religion, reason and ideas – have emerged and gradually been eclipsed. His Ages of Reason and Ideas, and their subsequent deaths, chimed with thoughts the author had been having about the archival sphere and have been co-opted here. (Rowland-Smith, 2015)

Introduction

Caroline Brown, in the introduction to *Archives and Recordkeeping: Theory into Practice*, began with the following quotation from Anthony Kenny's *A New History of Western Philosophy*:

Thomas Carlyle . . . was once reproached by a businessman for being too interested in mere ideas. 'There was once a man called Rousseau', Carlyle replied, 'who wrote a book containing nothing but ideas. The second edition was bound in the skins of those who laughed at the first'.

(Brown, 2014, xi)

This quotation was used as a tool to lead into the professional schism that exists within the recordkeeping community between theory and practice. The stated purpose of the book was to 'demonstrate the value of thinking about theory and its relationship with the practical world' (Brown, 2014, xi). That there was a need for a publication with such a purpose is strange because we have, as a profession, fallen in love with ideas. Since the middle of the 1970s – from around the time of the publication of F. G. Ham's 'The Archival Edge' and the creation of the *Archivaria* journal in 1975 – the archival community has embraced innovative ideas and theories. Whilst this is not to suggest that no previous innovation or theoretical thinking impacted on the profession prior to 1975 – Theodore Schellenberg, for example, revolutionised the profession in the immediate aftermath of World War II with his ideas of primary and secondary value (Schellenberg, 1956) – it is to recognise that the entwining of professional progression with theory, post-1975, subsequently moved the profession away from a conception of itself as insular, neutral and focused only on facilitating the outputs of historians, to that of Archival Science – the autonomous scientific discipline that covers theory, methodology and practice and encapsulates and expresses the importance of what it is that archivists and recordkeepers do. However, it is the contention of this chapter that what will be characterised as an Age of Archival Ideas is dead. Put succinctly, ideas in the archival sphere are past their prime in an Age of Information.

Definitions

For the purposes of this argument, what is meant by an 'idea'? The dictionary definition of an idea is 'a thought or suggestion about a possible course of action' (OUP, 2001, 442). In archival literature, there has

been a tendency to discuss theories rather than ideas; the definition of theory is ‘an idea or sets of ideas that is intended to explain something’ (OUP, 2001, 943). Whilst there is an external body of thought that distinguishes between theory and idea, this chapter uses the words interchangeably, understanding ideas and theories slightly differently to be figments or speculative framings, often, although not necessarily, without a connection to physical reality. Viewing them in this way helps us to move beyond an archival Burkean positivism and the requirement for theories or ideas to be tested in practice so as to ‘[be] entered into the canon of archival thought and take their places as *immutable laws of the profession* [author’s italics]’ (Burke, 1981, 42).

Whilst advocacy of universal laws is distinctly old-fashioned in the 21st century, what Burke is really forwarding is the notion of prevailing ideas (Rowland-Smith, 2015). These are not always active in our minds, but they form the context for our culture and inform our assumptions. For example, some prevailing archival ideas could include the principles of provenance/*respect des fonds* and original order. Prevailing ideas shape our attitudes, practices and educational, professional and ethical frameworks, if not quite being universal laws. Therefore, prevailing ideas are not innovative or new in the way that, for example, the Records Continuum model or the application of postmodernism within an archival context was in the post-1975 period. It is such innovative ideas that this chapter is referring to when stating that we have fallen in, and subsequently out of, love with ideas.

From an archival Age of Reason to an archival Age of Ideas

The archival profession does not operate in a vacuum and the move towards ideas mimicked changes in society (albeit a little behind the times – the archive profession is not one that could often be said to be cutting-edge). The counterculture movement of the 1960s spawned a plethora of ideas emerging from a new generation of disaffected, radicalised young people. From a freedom to focus beyond the provision of material necessities came a confluence of cultural ideas around human sexuality, women’s rights, ethnicity and traditional modes of authority and power relations that moved away from prevalent cultural mores (Patterson, 1996, 306-314). This decade was a demonstration of the leading role that ideas can play in the orientation of society and it subsequently had a seismic effect on the archive and the role of the archivist, via archival theorists drawing-on and co-opting aspects of what came to be known as postmodernist theory. According to the Encyclopedia of World Problems & Human Potential:

While encompassing a broad range of ideas, postmodernism is typically defined by an attitude of scepticism, irony or distrust toward grand narratives, ideologies and various tenets of universalism, including objective notions of reason, human nature, social progress, moral universalism, absolute truth, and objective reality.

08.11.2017 <http://encyclopedia.uia.org/en/problem/136818>.

Archives, up to this point, had been, like many other cultural institutions, a product of Enlightenment rationality. Institutions such as the Public Records Office of the United Kingdom, formed in 1838, and publications such as Muller, Feith and Fruin’s *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, published in 1898, or Hilary Jenkinson’s *A Manual of Archive Administration*, published in 1922, emerged from the encyclopaedic spirit of the Age of Reason and from notions that everything in the universe could

be rationally demystified and catalogued. This archive was rooted in scientific and historical enquiry, a discourse resting upon a set of techniques appropriated to proclaim with a measure of validity an approximation of the truth and an accurate representation of the world. Formative archival concepts such as provenance, original order, context and custody made it easy to tell the story of the past without conjecture. In this version of the archive, time slows down and the important facts slide along to the historian like suitcases on a conveyor belt at an airport; you pick them, put them on the page, and the job of writing factual history is done. Archivists, therefore, were impeccable custodians of history: 'the most selfless devotee of Truth the modern world produces' (Jenkinson, 1944, 16), gatekeepers to the maze within which seekers would lose themselves to the glories held within.

For archival postmodernists, or those simply influenced by postmodernist discourse, such faith in the archive and the archivist was untenable, 'at best outdated, at worst inherently dangerous' in the words of Elisabeth Kaplan (2000, 147). The postmodernist turn represented a predominantly theoretical shift in emphasis towards meaning(s) and away from positivist epistemology. In emphasising 'the casual and socially constitutive role of cultural processes and systems of signification' (Steinmetz, 1999, 1–2) there was an implicit recognition that society was a construct and not as it was presented. It was messier, there were truths rather than Truth, what was revealed was not objective fact but subjective selection and so on.

Hence the shift towards a questioning, theoretical, archival profession that emerged in the middle of the 1970s was an instance of individuals recognising practical failings, becoming self-conscious and asking each other: What are Archives? What is an Archivist? In so doing, a sector of the profession became liberated from the pure practicalities of a practical profession. They inherently understood that often ideas are not real; that, by definition, ideas are mental speculations that tend to reside in a realm above day-to-day realities and practicalities; that without conceptualisation of an alternative that is not a replication of current reality it is virtually impossible for better realities to come into being.

Postmodernism operated on a plain above the day-to-day practicalities of archiving however. As a result of its influence, the archival community became consumed by new and intellectually challenging ideas that propelled the profession forward via radical thought experiments that sought to overturn past certainties. This Age of Archival Ideas was the period of Terry Cook and Verne Harris; of Postmodernism and the Records Continuum model; of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault becoming staples of archival literature; of social justice and representation agendas coming to the fore; of culture and community; of politics, power and subjectivity; of the voiceless and the dispossessed; of archival intellectualisation and internationalisation; of the activist archivist; of professionalisation; and the emergence and solidification of what is known as Archival Science.

The end of archival ideas in an age of information

Why, then, the claim that this Age of Archival Ideas is dead? Firstly, the Age of Archival Ideas was founded upon an emerging body of theoretical archival literature that publicised the subversive thinking that was being undertaken and the revolution (or paradigm shift) that was taking place in Archival Science. The body of new, cutting-edge theoretical work that seeks to radically alter the outlook and practice of the

archival profession has, however, thinned considerably in the last decade. Admittedly such a claim may appear strange at this present time; for example, we have a flourishing publishing industry with several publishing houses seeking to initiate publications that deal in-depth with aspects of archival theory. In addition, there has been work published and undertaken recently that conceives of an archival alternative that is not simply a replication of current reality but envisions better realities to come. For example, the considerable and expanding literature on Community Archives, coupled with its practical implementation, which is being driven by people such as Andrew Flinn (2007), is both questioning and having a deep and long-lasting impact on the nature of the archive and what our role as archivists should be.

Yet, if you were asked to name the archival theorists who first come to mind then you would most likely come up with something along the lines of Terry Cook, Verne Harris, Eric Ketelaar, Brien Brothman, Tom Nesmith, Frank Upward, Sue McKemmish, Jeanette Bastian and Randall Jimerson. These theorists have for several years been using postmodernism and critical theories (Sue McKemmish acknowledged the influence of postmodernist musings on the Records Continuum (McKemmish, 2001, 347)) to construct a particular archival knowledge base and have all contributed to a paradigm that forms a loosely assembled carapace above us that unquestionably shapes our attitudes. Their ideas serve as our frame of reference; they have become the authors of the prevailing ideas of the profession and the work of Flinn, for example, slots neatly into their narrative.

It is not to do the names on this list a disservice, however, to state that these authors produced their main ideas, in some cases pioneering ideas for the profession, a number of years ago. Jimerson, whose main publication *Archives Power: memory, accountability and social justice* (Jimerson, 2009), represented, in the words of Dr Patricia Whatley, 'sustained research over 20 years' (Society of Archivists, <https://saa.archivists.org/store/archives-power-memory-accountability-and-social-justice/1354/>) and arose out of many similar arguments forwarded in prior journal articles (Jimerson, 2006 and 2007). Yet, so successful and ubiquitous have their ideas become that a cosy professional consensus has kicked-in with regards to what we can loosely term a democratisation or social justice agenda (Greene, 2013; Gauld, 2017). As a result, many journal articles written today represent a continuation of long-standing themes emergent from the pages of the aforementioned theorists rather than radical new ideas. They tend to seek to display how one archive or another has undertaken actions to support the processes of democratisation over the past couple of decades, opening the archive up to an increased number of users whilst democratising a set of processes that were previously elitist, closed off, inaccessible and representative of a societal power imbalance.

This is not to undermine the perspective of those articles that document progressive intentions, yet it is curious that, at a time of expanding numbers of archival graduates emerging from programmes around the world and increasing interdisciplinarity, the extent of genuinely new or critical thinking emerging from within the archival profession that challenges these current prevailing orthodoxies or seeks to change the archival direction of travel appears to be contracting in contrast to that coming from outside the profession – particularly the thought-provoking and creative work found, for example, in *The Archive Project: archival research in the social sciences* (Moore et al., 2016).

However, having previously stated that archives do not operate in a vacuum, the author would suggest that the demise of ideas in an archival context is not occurring in isolation. There is a wider shift taking place whereby ideas in general society are, today, quite simply not what they used to be. This is a thought that has been forwarded by Neil Gabler, Senior Fellow at the University of Southern California:

Once upon a time, they could ignite fires of debate, stimulate other thoughts, incite revolutions and fundamentally change the way we look and think about the world. They could penetrate the general culture and make celebrities out of thinkers.

(Gabler, 2011)

No longer. What we see today are experts ridiculed (YouTube, 2016), celebrities feted as great thinkers (Petersen, 2015) and the rise of reactionaries. At the time of writing, Donald J. Trump is the President of the United States; Marine Le Pen made it to the run-off of the French Presidential Election in April 2017; the far-right, nationalist AfD have made gains in German parliamentary elections (September 2017), winning 12.6% of the vote; and religious extremism is terrorising large parts of the globe in the form of Daesh/ISIS. A history of the demise of ideas within society is too complex for a chapter of this length however, as Gabler (2011) outlines, 'we live in a society that no longer thinks big'. Instead, we live in a post-idea society where people do not think at all:

In effect, we are living in an increasingly post-ideas world – a world in which big, thought-provoking ideas that can't be instantly monetised are of so little intrinsic value that fewer people are generating them and fewer outlets are disseminating them, the internet notwithstanding. Bold ideas are almost passe.

(Gabler, 2011)

Gabler goes on to attack some obvious modern tools, Twitter for example. Attacking them individually does not, for this author, achieve anything nor get to the root of any problem. However, he is on to something when he argues that the problem is information itself: the Information Age is simply dangerous for ideas. This may appear counter-intuitive for a generation that has the level of information at our fingertips that we do. However, as Paul Virilio cautioned in 1995, 'What will be gained from electronic information and electronic communication will necessarily result in a loss elsewhere' (Virilio, 1995). What has seemingly been lost is the ability to contextualise information. As Gabler states:

In the past, we collected information to convert it into something larger than facts (or alternative facts) and ultimately more useful – into ideas that made sense of the information. We sought not just to apprehend the world but to truly comprehend it, which is really the primary function of ideas.

(Gabler, 2011)

Our ability to stand back and to assess where the information came from, to ascertain its authenticity and veracity, to question rather than digest, has been diminished in this argument. This, with the rise of Donald Trump, fake news and the post-truth society, is now seen in many instances as a virtue (BBC Trending,

2016; D'Ancona, 2017, 7-34). Hence, we prefer knowing to thinking because knowing has more immediate value. It keeps us in the loop, keeps us connected to our friends and our cohorts within our self-made silos or safe spaces where we can communicate only with those we consider 'good' or 'virtuous' (Tett, 2015, 12-16).

Additionally, this information universe has changed the game for information professionals as having such quantities of information at our fingertips has made us come to expect, as consumers, instant results. The consumer is the central figure in twenty-first century discourse and marks a shift from passive recipient to active choice-maker in relation to service provision. The archival profession has been unable to stand apart from this. Technology has shifted the power away from the organization and the information professional towards the individual user. As stewards of cultural materials, archives have always managed access to, and use of, their collections, but the digital environment is radically changing cultural consumption and production patterns, obliging archives to re-think how they relate to their audiences as users of cultural content.

More and more, users are expecting that the effort it takes to undertake research within an archive be lessened. The community expects its information sources to be available online and increasingly regards anything that is not online as being irrelevant. For funders, this market language of use and efficiencies is key whilst an ethos of managerialism strips the ethical and moral away from public services. Hence, it becomes more difficult to display the relevance of archives and archivists in the 21st century. Cultural gatekeepers are dispensable; physical, hard copy access to records is passé as people want online only; the digital archive is a nebulous concept at the heart of which lie Information Technologists rather than Information Professionals, and so on.

This is reflected in the perilous financial situation many publicly-funded archives find themselves in in the United Kingdom. Although it is difficult in the UK to ascertain authoritative figures as local authority and publicly-funded archives operate in a very diverse sector, with many also subsumed within library services and larger heritage services, we do know that 'public bodies [were] dealing with cuts to their budgets of between 25 and 40%' according to *Archives of the 21st Century in Action: refreshed 2012-15* (The National Archives, 2012). This document has now been superseded by *Archives Unlocked: Releasing the Potential* (The National Archives, 2017). Avoiding the anodyne title and its insinuation that the profession has been failing to fulfil its potential all these years, it is interesting that amidst the discussions of releasing this potential and think-pieces on the archival direction of travel, there is nothing on cuts or current funding and staffing levels that would enable the action plan to be implemented effectively. This suggests that the situation has not improved.

It may be that this, and the call in the Ministerial Foreword for a future 'in which businesses, creative industries, arts organisations, academic, and communities can fully *exploit* [author's italics] archives' (The National Archives, 2017, 1) is illustrative. As a consequence, archives are having to fight tooth-and-nail to remain viable in this environment. The *Archives Unlocked* document outlined the following as key points for action going forward:

- Develop the **digital capacity** of the archive sector, to preserve digital records and increase discoverability of the paper and digital archive.
- Build the sector's **resilience** to ensure more archives can meet and sustain the Archive Service Accreditation standard, open the sector to new skills and a more diverse workforce, increase income generation capacities, and support innovative service models.
- Demonstrate the **impact** of archives by developing and expanding audiences, piloting approaches to using data and evidence, and influencing thinking in the IT, commercial and knowledge sectors.

(The National Archives, 2017, 17)

These follow on from similar action points in the preceding *Archives of the 21st Century in Action* document which coalesced around similar core themes of access, inclusion and digitisation. Hence, it is understandable if ideas that seek to radically alter are not relevant at a time of extreme technological, societal and financial pressure where the profession must focus on concrete goals linked to government strategies simply to prove its worth, or unlock its potential, rather than engaging with, or developing, radical new conceptions of professional practice. The focus, therefore, is on developing a more symbiotic relationship with our users in that we shape services more to their needs and expectations; becoming increasingly flexible in our approaches to preserving records in both centralised and distributed custodial settings; digitising collections that have the most worth, both in terms of use and monetarisation; designing user interfaces that take into account different user expectations; and, at the extreme, reducing archives purely to data so as to save money on storage.

The future of the profession?

Despite scepticism amongst some practitioners (Hunt, 2009, 10), ideas and theories have fundamentally changed the profession from that which existed in 1975, even if day-to-day practitioners do not fully realise it or even if recordkeeping does not fully conform to the prescriptions set out within these ideas. The reason archivists are engaging in day-to-day, taken-for-granted activities such as outreach initiatives, connecting, liaising and assisting community archives, being involved in the design of the organizational EDRMS, or, if students, being taught about recordkeeping rather than just archive management or records management, is due to the ideas set out by the pioneering archival thinkers that came before us. As a result, we must, as a profession, recognise the role that ideas and theories can play in such a practice-based discipline: there is nothing wrong with being interested in 'mere ideas'.

However, if an Age of Archival Ideas is dead, as this author suggests, does this mean that the Archival Science race is run? Are we useless in the absence of new ideas, an ever-diminishing intellectual and professional life force? Categorically, the answer is no. Ultimately, an assertion that an Age of Archival Ideas is dead is clearly a provocative observation open to the accusation of hyperbole and could be viewed as innately pessimistic in that it points to a lack of intellectualisation or critical thinking. This is not, of course, the case. It is rather to suggest that energies and attentions are generally directed elsewhere into more 'practical' matters, ensuring that we become, in the eyes of the Government, inclusive and accessible organisations (Department for Media, Culture and Sport, 2000), or assisting in the development of digitisation solutions that will increase access to the historical record.

These are valid and important concerns and provide short-term value in ensuring that we can provide visible evidence of immediate work undertaken that can play within predominately Governmental strategies – a practice-based discipline focusing on practical outcomes and relevance at a time of extreme hardship is unavoidable. Also, it does need to be qualified that an age ‘past’ is not an age expunged and that many of the ideas and concepts that emerged post-1975 are alive and active within the prevailing framework of archival discourse and practice. Nor does it mean that original and radical ideas and theories will not emerge within archival literature going forward but, rather, that the importance invested in them by the profession will not be comparable to its golden age as professional focus will continue to be directed, correctly, elsewhere.

However, it does feel that a seismic change has taken place within the archival profession and we have reached ‘peak-theory’. Before, it was a common lament in certain quarters that individual practitioners simply did not have time to be interested in theory and ideas. As Brown writes:

. . . for many, faced with the day-to-day realities of managing the records, people and resources in their care, dealing with managers and stakeholders, and keeping in check the relentless tide of e-mails, there is little time for consideration of the big picture.

(Brown, 2014, xi)

Today, however, it seems that the challenges facing us are so great that the impracticality or irrelevance of ideas envelops the overarching whole. How are we to react or compete when Google’s mission statement is to ‘organise the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful’ (Google)? This is the biggest idea going in the 21st century and it comes from the technological behemoth that sits astride access to information on the World Wide Web. In this scenario, the internet is literally the archive:

. . . a repository of material which has only been loosely classified, material whose status is as yet indeterminate and stands between rubbish, junk and significance: material that has not yet been read and researched.

(Featherstone, 2006, 594)

In this environment, we are hanging on by our fingertips, seeking to find a foothold in this disorientating Age of Information whilst trying to ignore the elephant in the room that is that it is all futile anyway as Artificial Intelligence in the form of algorithms will be doing all our jobs for us in 30 years (Theimer, 2017).

So, what is to be done? To return to Brown:

Arguing about and working towards an understanding of what archives and records are, what recordkeepers do and why they do it is one of the elements that contributes to our status as a profession.

(Brown, 2014, xvii)

Indeed. However, it is the belief of this author that too much conversation tends to take place criticising the nature of the archive and, more specifically, the role of the archivist. For a number of years, wading through professional literature or attending professional conferences has felt like an exercise in self-flagellation, where postmodernist critiques, some of which were appropriate when first communicated, are repeated and repeated ad nauseam. It can be rather draining, for all the virtues and good intentions inherent in the ideas, to be continually told how we as archivists are to blame for all manner of documentary ills; how the profession could be 'inherently dangerous'; how admitting ones failings and exposing our personal or political biases is more important than acting professionally and aiming for as close to neutrality or objectivity as is within our capabilities; and how there is no such thing as 'fact' or 'truth'.

Perhaps what is needed now is not that we retract even further into ourselves, becoming nothing more than a talking-shop or echo chamber in the face of the most fundamental challenges the profession has faced since becoming professionalised, continually talking and debating what we do, what we ought to do and how important we are to key agendas of the day. Instead, we need to stop being sheepish and reach a professional consensus that recognises and understands that what we do as guardians of the evidence on which an individual's or societal truth can be established is a valid statement of professional practice and is of substantial value. Evidence, cared for properly, in context, can proclaim an *approximation* of the truth. As Terry Eastwood wrote:

Archival documents do capture a moment in time, fix and freeze it, as it were, in order to preserve some sense of it for future reference, some sense of the unique character of the actions and events from which the documents arose.

(Eastwood, 1993, 112)

Therefore, our core professional tenets and competencies, those that have underpinned us since the days of the *Manual of Archival Administration*, have a place in the 21st century. We need to mount a spirited defence of the archive and to communicate it loudly and proudly beyond our professional boundaries.

Indeed, we do not need to look far to find inspiration. Recent developments in the United States with Donald Trump and the United Kingdom via Brexit have brought with them a call to find added value in the archive and the reassertion of concepts such as facts and evidence and truth – concepts that should be at the core of what we think we are doing as archivists. In this environment, there is a place for someone who seeks to be 'professional', displaying trustworthiness, possessing appropriate specialist knowledge and skills, and aspiring to excellence (Cogan, 1953). In acting in this manner, the archive can be a conduit through which authentic and reliable records of evidence can be used to deduce what has happened. As Heather MacNeil has outlined, a philosophical ideal of truth emerges from a philosophy of rational belief based on probability:

Assent to any proposition was to be based on the strength of the evidence, that is, on the strength of the connection between the proposition to be proved and the material offered as proof; and

there was a new emphasis on the grading of evidence on the scales of reliability and probable truth. Hence, the truth of any proposition could be established by reasoning from the relevant evidence, with reason operating within a framework of inferences, generalisation and probabilities.

(MacNeil, 2001, 38)

It would seem to me that this lay behind the post-Brexit posting by Margaret Proctor on an archival list-serv (Proctor, 2016). Whilst disagreeing with her overarching analysis that the vote was a ‘failure in education, in information dissemination’, suggesting that those who voted out were anti-intellectuals who did not have the full facts (or bother to find them out), it is clear to me that ‘Evidence – authentic, accessible and contextualised’ is key to improving the democratic processes of the future and could be a clarion call for all professionals and professional action. Indeed, the Latin roots of the term *evidentem* is ‘perceptible, clear, obvious’ (Online Etymology Dictionary), reinforcing the need for evidence as a counterpoint to those who seek to mislead and misinform.

Conclusion

The response of the archival community must be to work within traditional principles and parameters and, more concretely, embed these principles and parameters – these prevailing ideas, if you will – within archival solutions to digital problems. Should a societal backlash to the misuse of information continue and flourish then it may be that we will see an increased validation of the archival role with a move to re-contextualisation, with the digital environment and its myriad of avenues and never-ending choices leading to greater demands for re-intermediation, involving contextual framing and the archival intermediary. This is precisely the area that an individual like Geoffrey Yeo is working in, with his investigations into the nature of the record in the digital environment (Yeo, 2007, 2012, 2014, 2017) and:

... how, in digital realms, we can and should embrace the potential for granular or item-oriented approaches that will support contextualisation but will also allow users to assemble and reassemble their own aggregations in ways that respond to their differing needs and perceptions.

(Yeo, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dis/people/geoffreyyeo/research>)

In addition, there are, for example, those such as Luciana Duranti and her work on digital forensics (Duranti and Endicott-Popovsky, 2010) and Victoria Lemieux on blockchain and the value of its technology in creating and preserving trustworthy records (Lemieux, 2016). What Yeo, Duranti and Lemieux are doing, as individuals, is finding forward-thinking, innovative, practical resolutions to ensure that the archival profession can remain relevant over the next 30 years with its traditional principles and integrity intact. Work such as this presents the best hope we have of ensuring the long-term preservation of the profession and enabling the archivist, and the principles we hold dear, to endure in the digital domain. By so doing, they, and others, may create professional space for the radical archival ideas of the future.

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